

# Senior Citizens and Medications



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# DATA – SENIORS AND MEDICATIONS

- From Health and Human Services:
  - More than 10,000 people turn 65 every day in the United States
  - Fifty-five percent of elderly are non-compliant with medication instructions<sup>1</sup>
  - Approximately 200,000 older adults are hospitalized annually due to adverse drug reactions<sup>2</sup>

1: [Reducing Medication Problems of the Elderly: A Management Advisory Report \(OEI-04-89-89122; 10/90\) \(hhs.gov\)](#)

2: [Patient Safety Organizations: Hospital Participation, Value, and Challenges Report \(OEI-01-17-00420\) 09-25-2019 \(hhs.gov\)](#)

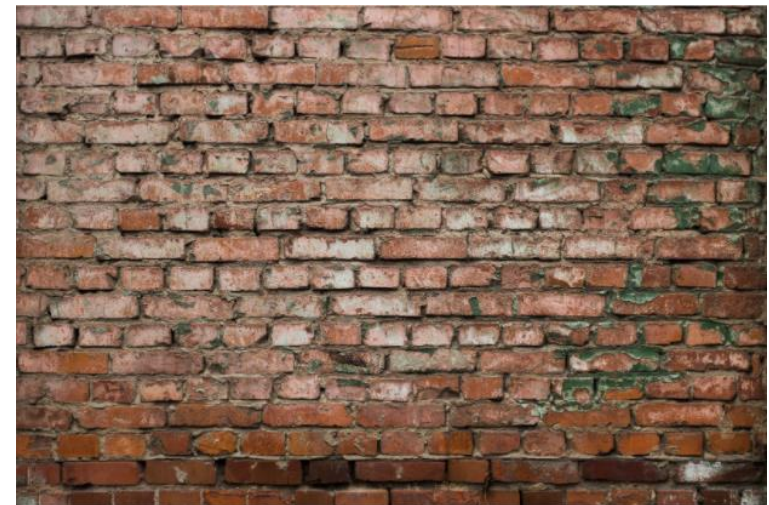
# DATA – SENIORS AND MEDICATIONS

- Lown Institute report<sup>1</sup>
  - More than 40% older Americans regularly take five or more medications and almost 20% take more than 10 medications
  - Every day, approximately 750 older Americans are hospitalized due to serious side effects from one or more medications
  - the odds of experiencing a serious adverse reaction to a medication increases 7–10% with each additional drug

1. [Solving Medication Overload: America's Other Drug Problem | Health Affairs](#)

# MEDICATION OBSTACLES FOR SENIORS

- Common situations that may inhibit a senior from managing medications appropriately
  - 1. Financial
  - 2. Access to Pharmacy/Medications
  - 3. Vision Loss
  - 4. Memory Loss
  - 5. Decreased Ability to Swallow
  - 6. Hearing Loss
  - 7. Social Isolation



# FINANCIAL

- Problem: Can range from limited income to extremely expensive medications
- Solutions:
  - Use generics when possible
  - Research finance assistance programs
    - Samples; Manufacture coupons; GoodRx;
  - Purchase additional Medicare Part D plan

# ACCESS TO PHARMACY/MEDICATIONS

- Problems: When multiple prescriptions, can't keep track; transportation to pharmacy
- Solutions:
  - Mailorder pharmacies
  - Bubble/compliance packaging
  - Convenience timing
    - Work with thirds party insurance to move all refill dates to once per month for all prescriptions

# ACCESS TO PHARMACY/MEDICATIONS

- Problems: When multiple prescriptions, can't keep track; transportation to pharmacy
- Solutions:
  - Deprescribing
    - [Deprescribing.org](http://Deprescribing.org) (Bruyere Research Institute – Ontario, Canada)
    - Medication Appropriateness Index
    - Beers Criteria/List

# VISION LOSS

- Problem: Not able to read small print on vials or distinguish between medications
- Solutions:
  - Ask if pharmacy can print large font labels
  - Bubble/convenience packaging
  - Microchipped label or bottle with reader
    - Can speak the label information



# MEMORY LOSS

- Problem: Can range from simple forgetfulness to Alzheimer's/Dementia
- Solution:
  - Use pill boxes, bubble/convenience packaging, auto-dispenser
  - Alarmed pill boxes
  - Professional in-home caregivers

# DECREASED ABILITY TO SWALLOW

- Problem: Many seniors develop a problem of swallowing
- Solutions:
  - Identify medication to be crushed or mixed
  - Convert to liquid

# HEARING LOSS

- Problem: Patient may not have heard or understood administration instructions
- Solutions:
  - Utilize caregiver (family or professional)
  - Share printed instructions
  - Pharmacy to follow-up with patient to verify patient knows how to take correctly

# SOCIAL ISOLATION

- Problem: Many elderly live alone with no support and may become disinterested or depressed
- Solutions:
  - Utilize family or professional caregiver
  - Be aware

# QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION

